

Work/Life Newsletter

Work/Life News

January 2002

Extra, Extra...



Announcing the Nominees for the Commissioner's Outstanding Quality of Life Program Award



The Commissioner's Outstanding Quality of Life Programs Honor Award recognizes employees who have demonstrated outstanding, innovative achievements in advocating, recommending or implementing programs or a special activity, which promote balancing a career and personal needs of employees and their families. The following employees were nominated by their coworkers for their exceptional efforts in promoting work and life program activities in 2000. The nominees' accomplishments are especially noteworthy since these are voluntary efforts.

As soon as Commissioner Keys confirms the Manager and Employee Award Recipients, the winners will be announced in an all-employee Reclamation-wide e-mail notification.

For those of you that nominated someone. . . A **BIG THANK YOU** for taking the time to acknowledge the great work that our employees/managers are doing out there in the work/life arena -- helping us all to balance work and life.

The nominees for the manager's award were:

Mike Armbruster (Denver-TSC) for his management style, which allows employees to perform their duties utilizing flexible work schedules and telecommuting.

Larry Armer (GP Region) for his creative use of flexible workplace programs, which allowed a valued employee to provide specialized care for a family member.

Diana Cardon (Denver-MSO) for encouraging her staff to utilize flexible work schedules to allow them to attend college classes.

Joe Carriero (Denver-TSC) for improving office morale by encouraging varied training methods and creating an open avenue of communication which promotes an enthusiastic work atmosphere.

Filiberto Cortez (UC Region) for his sensitivity to the needs of his employees and his efforts to make the workplace and work arrangements as accommodating to his staff as possible.

Carol Lynn Erwin (LC Region) for her commitment to helping employees meet the responsibilities of both work and home life by fostering an environment that helps to bolster greater productivity and high morale.

Terry Ford (PN Region) for taking the initiative to develop a yoga stress management program for the Regional Office.

James Meredith (MP Region) for allowing his staff to use alternative work schedules to accommodate personal needs while still fulfilling work requirements.

Roger Pollock (MP Region) for utilizing alternative work schedules and telecommuting to allow employees to work a full-time schedule rather than having to be on extended sick leave.

Group including Susan Harper, Janel Potucek, Gail Kern, and Roy Patterson (LC Region) for uniting in a collaborative effort to create a work environment that not only functions efficiently and effectively; but

one where all employees realize that their individual contributions on the job are valued, and their personal needs while off the job are understood and supported.

The nominees for the employee award were:

Monica Bronson (PN Region) for addressing alternative forms of transportation that significantly improved employees awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the importance of conserving energy. As a result of her efforts, several employees now walk or ride their bikes to work.

Pauline Brown (UC Region) for arranging periodic blood drives, health screenings, and immunizations for the office.

Gerald Casares (LC Region) for focusing his attention on fitness activities for the office by introducing softball challenge matches. Participation in the softball matches was extended to include the children of employees.

Michelle Klose (GP Region) for introducing a community fitness program to the office. This successful program encouraged people to exercise over the fall and winter months.

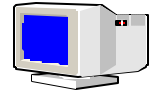
June Thomsen (GP Region) for her diligence in getting employee participation for onsite Weight Watchers Meetings in the Great Plains Regional Office.

Glenda Vernon (LC Region) for getting her office involved in community efforts by placing empty boxes throughout her building in which to collect toiletries for the needy.

Tom Walsh (UC Region) for making significant contributions to raise the social conscience of the Upper Colorado Region staff by getting employees involved in volunteering at a local homeless shelter.

Congratulations to all nominees for your great work and commitment to Reclamation and its work/life programs.

Electronic Mail



While e-mail has great advantages, it is best to be careful using it. It is just one more “method” of communication. Some advantages of using e-mail instead of the telephone are that e-mail is less interruptive, a record of the request made/information is created, and recipients can choose when to respond. These very advantages can cause trouble if you’re not careful. Here are some hints:

Personnel issues (and personal information) do not belong in e-mails - - they can, and will be, misdirected.

Read e-mails carefully before sending to avoid unintentionally giving offense. Be brief without being abrupt. Use specific “subject lines” to reflect the content of the message.

Spelling and punctuation do count - -be sure to check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Acronyms are OK, as long as they are commonly understood.

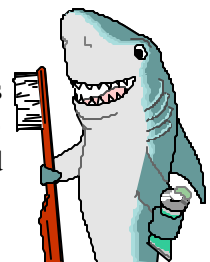
Don’t forward messages without permission and don’t cc everyone in your organization.

Don’t forward chain letters. Don’t use humor or sarcasm - - it can be easily misunderstood.

Remember e-mail messages never really disappear - - they’re always out there somewhere.

Better Dental Coverage

The following is from the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) web site on frequently asked questions at www.opm.gov/insure.



Q. Why do a few health plans have dental benefits and most do not?

A. Several years ago we stopped allowing plans to add new dental and vision packages or to increase packages they already had in place. We allow one

exception -- when an HMO offers the benefits under their community package of benefits (at no additional cost to members). We do this because we firmly believe that Federal employees are best served by benefit packages that are strong in the traditional areas of hospital, surgical, and medical benefits and that provide protection against significant and largely unforeseeable health care expenditures. Everyone wants to keep premium increases as low as possible so, generally, to increase benefits plans make trade-offs. We would not want to sacrifice medical benefits to get dental or vision benefits.

It is important that you do not choose a health plan based on dental benefits alone. You may find yourself without other benefits when you need them, which could result in large unexpected medical expenses.

Remember to look at the entire benefits package when making your health plan decision.

Q. If my health plan does not have a dental plan, is there any other way I may get one?

A. Some health plans offer dental and vision benefits separate from the officially offered benefits stated in their FEHB brochures. Such separate benefits are described on the "Non-FEHB Benefits" page in FEHB brochures. The plans solely determine what is covered and what is excluded and you must pay any premium associated with these benefits directly to the health or dental plan. There is no government contribution toward the premium on non-FEHB benefits. Also, the GEHA health plan and possibly other plans offer a separate dental plan that does not require you to be a member of their health plan. And, occasionally, an agency's employee organization offers dental and vision benefits to the agency's employees. Check with your human resources office. (IDRA or Union sponsored plans)

Q. How can I tell which FEHB plans offer either a regular or a separate dental benefit?

A. Check their FEHB brochures' index. Regular dental and vision benefits that are part of a health plan's FEHB benefit offering will be in the brochure's benefit sections and on the summary page. Separate dental benefits will only be on the brochure's Non-FEHB

Benefits page. You may also use the health plan choices assistance tool on the FEHB web site that is operated by PlanSmartChoice to help locate health plans with regular dental benefits.

Wellness Tip

The most common New Year's resolution is, "I'm going to lose weight." To help in this endeavor, we thought this would be a good tip to add this issue. Good luck with all your resolutions.

If you're going to eat the health-wise way, it's important that you have the right attitude about food, that you never think of it as the "enemy." Unfortunately, that's often the message from diet gurus. Severe diets, people are finally realizing, only make matters worse. The more you deny yourself, the more you wolf down in the end. The solution: Allow yourself to eat and the dieting demons will loosen their hold.

EAT TO SATISFY YOUR PALATE

In the words of one weight-loss expert, "food isn't the dieter's problem; it's the solution." Some dieters have gained control of their waists by abandoning tasteless "lite" foods and the sterile convenience of frozen diet dinners. Eat to satisfy hunger and your palate, just make sure you stop before you're too full. One thing that might help you push away from the table sooner than in the past is knowing that another delicious meal is right around the corner. You don't have to deprive yourself - - especially of flavor - - to make a diet work. Indeed, the fresher the more high-quality the ingredients, the easier it is to prepare mouth-watering meals that are low in calories. You can perform magic with a piece of fish when you've got the greenest greens, the reddest peppers, some garlic, and extra virgin olive oil.

That's all well and good, you might say, but what about those secret sinners among us who would sell their souls for a 32-ounce bag of candy-coated chocolates? Cheer up. A lot of chocoholics, potato-chip addicts, and other victims of temporary food insanity have found a clever answer that may help you, too: They keep the pantry stocked with their favorite food, knowing that because it's there, they can decide

calmly when and if they really want it - - rather than running to the store for a midnight binge. "Scarcity makes people anxious; surplus calms them down," says Jane Hirschmann, coauthor of ***Overcoming Overeating***. Some people find that it helps to savor a bite-sized serving of their favorite food every day, knowing that if they denied themselves, they'd be in danger of a frenzied raid on the pantry.

Source: Time Health Media.com

Happy New Year

Happy New Year from the
Reclamation Work/Life
Team.



We hope you have a healthy and prosperous New Year and look forward to serving you as your representatives to the Work/Life Team. Please contact us at anytime with your ideas or concerns.

New Year's resolution for all of us: I will try to balance my work and life better this year.

Be sure to remember our service men and women fighting for our freedom.

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